

DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

COUNTRY PROFILE: *The Republic of Maldives is a group of coral islands in the Indian Ocean, located 670 km southwest of Sri Lanka consisting of some 26 natural atolls grouped into 19 administrative areas called "Atolls". Out of 1,190 islands, 202 are inhabited. Male is the capital and the centre of political, social, and commercial life of the Maldives.*

Economy, Population and Demography: With a free market economy, the main economic sectors are tourism, fishing, agriculture, and small industries. The country is progressing well under its national development plans. The Gross Domestic Product is Rufiya 623.3 million and is growing at 7.06% per annum. The income per capita is Rf.3,278.

The Maldivians hold Islamic faith, and use the Dhevehi language. The population is 195,100; 101,134 males and 93,966 females. The annual growth rate is 3.5% with the average density of more than 650 per sq.km.

Languages of Instruction: English is used in the Capital of Male, and Dhevehi in Atolls and the islands.

Educational System: Dual educational systems: traditional education system and modern English medium system. The newly conceived unified educational system is five 5) years primary education; two(2) years upper primary education or mid school; three(3) years Lower Secondary Education leading to GCE "O" Level; and two(2) years Upper Secondary School preparing for GCE "A" Level. There is no institution of higher learning. The literacy rate is 93.25%.

Communication Infrastructure: Existing communication infra-structure includes (1) radio broadcast, both AM and FM and radio communication; (2) TV broadcast in PAL-B system in Male, and (3) telephone link via micro-wave from Male to various Atolls. There are no official transports and postal services from Male to other Atolls. The transportation and postal services are operated by the private sector.

OVERVIEW OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education in the Republic of Maldives is in the initial stage. It is provided by the Non-Formal Education Unit, Ministry of Education. One distance education programme in teaching English is being implemented as a pilot project. Also, the project on Distance Education for Non-Formal Education Unit is being prepared out for nation-wide implementation.

Factors Leading the Establishment of DE Programme:

(1) A large number of dropouts who need primary and secondary education, (2) "over-age" youth groups who need primary and secondary education, (3) adults and senior groups who need basic education, (4) JSC holders who need to upgrade their academic background at secondary level, (5) "O" level and "A" level graduates or equivalent who need higher, post secondary education, (6) special interest and professional groups who need different types of education to meet their demands and interests, and (7) other programmes to serve community needs.

Year of Establishment:

Established as a pilot project in the Distance Education English Course (DEEC) in 1989.

Media for Distance Education:

A multi-media approach of distance education instructional media based on printed media, audio materials, face-to-face workshops, and peer groups tutorials.

Sources of Financial Supports:

The Distance Education English Course is financed by UNICEF under the Condensed Educational Project through Non-Formal Education Unit, Ministry of Education. The source and forms of financial supports remain unchanged since it was started.

Trends of Development of Distance Education:

Increasing especially with the assistance by UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and UNFPA to make use of distance education as an alternative approach for non-formal education.

Legal Status:

Fully protected by the agreement between the Government of the Republic of Maldives and concerned agencies providing financial supports to distance education programmes.

Aims:

1) To provide education through non-formal education for the various target groups who have not completed any standard, and (2) to provide education and training to special interest groups in order to upgrade their knowledge and skills which will ultimately improve the qualities of their life and their work.

Control and Management:

Distance education is to be implemented by the Non-Formal Education Unit, Ministry of Education in close collaboration with other governmental sub-sectors.

<i>Coverage of Distance Education:</i>	Presently, covering a group of selected Atolls. In the future, it is expected to cover nation-wide.
<i>Instructional System:</i>	A multi-media approach of distance education instructional media based on printed media, audio materials, face-to-face workshops, and peer groups tutorials .
<i>Research Activities:</i>	Only those related to the development of the pilot project on Distance Education English Course are being conducted.
<i>Enrollment in Distance Education:</i>	About 300 students in the DEEC programme. In the future, more than 60,000 are expected after the full implementation of distance education programmes.
<i>International Affiliation and Cooperation:</i>	UNICEF, UNDP, and UNESCO, WHO, ILO, and VSO.
<i>Growth and Expansion of Distance Education:</i>	It is quite definite that distance education will grow and expand as it is considered the most promising alternative means for providing mass education.
<i>Problems and Constraints:</i>	Shortage of personnel, lack of communication infrastructure, information system and educational technology infrastructure, public's attitude and persistency to carry on distance education, and insufficient points for the delivery system.

**LIST OF
DISTANCE
EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS:**

- 1. Distance Education English Course (DEEC)**
Non-Formal Education Unit, Ministry of Education.

DISTANCE EDUCATION DIVISION NON-FORMAL EDUCATION UNIT, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

INSTITUTIONAL DATA:

Head **Mr. Abdul Sattar Hassen**
Position: *Deputy Director*
Address: Sosun Road, Male
 Republic of Maldives.

Nature of institution: A division in the Non-Formal Education Unit, Ministry of Education.

**Educational levels
Provided for distance
education:**

1. Primary for children and adults
2. Secondary for children and adults
3. Literacy programmes
4. Training
5. Further education
6. Continuing education.

**Title and
level of DE
programme:**

Title: Distance Education English Course
Level: Primary/Secondary Education.

Governance: A national establishment.

Objectives:

1. Teacher Training
2. Compensatory nature for basic primary education
3. Expansion of educational opportunity
4. Life-long recurrent education for adults
5. Individual vocational development.

**Sources of financial
support of DE
programme:**

Tuition and Fees:

1. International assistance: UNICEF, UNDP/UNESCO, UNFPA
2. Government subsidies.

Budget:
Approximately US\$200,000 from international assistance.

Development trends in resources and activities in DE:	Most resources and activities in distance education in the Republic of Maldives are gradually expanding, especially with the full implementation of the UNDP/UNESCO project on Distance Education for Non-Formal Education.
Overall trends of enrollment in DE Programs:	Increasing.
Total number of current DE students:	300.
Total number of annual intake of DE students:	About 100.
Total number of students currently enrolled in each DE level:	About 300.
Number of annual DE graduates:	About 100.
Total number of DE graduates:	About 200.
Major components of the teaching force involved in DE:	A mix of full time and part-time members and volunteers from VSO.
Total number of full-time staff:	2.
Total number of part-time staff:	10-15 at Atoll level.
Number of course and Programme:	<i>Number of course:</i> 1. <i>Number of program:</i> 1.
Production of Teaching Materials:	A course team consisting of assigned various writers. Course team meets and assigns writers for each unit of teaching materials. The steps are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design the course outline of teaching materials 2. Design the structure of course materials 3. Appoint writers 4. Provide training on radio/audio script writing 5. Allocate workloads

6. Produce and review draft materials
7. Print materials
8. Conduct training.

Regional/Study Centres:	Available.										
<i>Number of regional centres:</i>	Three regional centres, in Haa-Daal Atoll, Lhaviyani Atoll, and Laamu Atoll.										
<i>Operators of regional centres:</i>	Heads, Atoll Education Centres.										
<i>Sources of financial support:</i>	Partly from UNICEF and from the Maldives government.										
<i>Major functions of Regional Centres:</i>	To set up workshops, provide tutorials and counselling services, and administer the examinations.										
Student Characteristics:											
<i>Age distribution:</i>	<table> <tr> <td>Years:</td><td>(%)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Under 21</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr> <td>Between 21-30</td><td>100.0</td></tr> <tr> <td><u>Total:</u></td><td><u>100.0</u></td></tr> </table>	Years:	(%)	Under 21	-	Between 21-30	100.0	<u>Total:</u>	<u>100.0</u>		
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<i>Occupational Distribution:</i>	Teachers and Atoll officers.										
<i>Ethnic Composition:</i>	Homogeneous.										

Future plans or possible developments:

In the next 5-10 years, the Republic of Maldives is planning to use distance education as an alternative means for achieving universal primary education and secondary education under the UNDP/UNESCO project. The Non-Formal Education Unit is to be upgraded to be the Department of Non-Formal Education.

Major obstacles for the implementation of distance education:

1. Inadequate communications and transportation infra-structure
2. Inadequate financial supports
3. Shortage of full-time personnel devoted to distance education
4. Insufficient points for the delivery system
5. Public attitude towards distance education is still not positive.

Affiliation with international organizations in DE:

UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, VSO, and UNFPA.

PROGRAMME, MEDIA, METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

List of Programme:
Distance Education English Course (DEEC)

PROGRAMME I: DISTANCE EDUCATION ENGLISH COURSE (DEEC)

Level:	1. Primary for children and adults 2. Secondary for children and adults 3. Literacy programmes 4. Training 5. Further education 6. Continuing education.
Title given for this educational level:	<i>Title:</i> Distance Education English Course <i>Level:</i> Primary/Secondary Education
Programme of Instruction:	1. English Language 2. Education and teacher training.
Length of courses:	<i>Number of study hours:</i> 2 hours per week per course <i>Number of weeks:</i> 10 weeks per course <i>Number of Courses:</i> One.
Media and Method:	Most dominant are printed texts, audio-cassettes, radio broadcast, face-to-face tutoring, kits, practical work, regional services, study centre, and training workshop.
Languages of instruction:	Dhivehi in Atolls and islands, and English in the Capital (Male).
Entrance requirements:	1. The student must have completed primary education 2. The student must be a citizen of the country 3. The student must be a current employee (teachers and Atoll officers) 4. The student must be recommended by his/her employer.
Number of students enrolled at this level:	About 300.
Total annual intake of DE students at this level:	About 100.

Evaluation System:*Continuous:*

1. Written regular tests
2. Written intermediary examinations
3. Oral intermediary examinations
4. Attendance at regular workshops at the study centres
4. Constant contact with principal advisor/tutor.

Final:

1. Written and oral examinations
2. Attendance at intensive workshops.

Educational and employment arrangements:

Students are already employed in various schools and Atoll Education Centres, so they are guaranteed employment upon completing the programme.

Student characteristics:**Proportion
(in %)***By Educational Level:*

Primary: 30.0

Secondary: 70.0

Total: 100.0

By employment:

Full-time public 100.0

employees: Total: 100.0

*By Types of Career:**In-service trainees*

(e.g. teachers, 100.0

nurses, etc): Total 100.0

Acceptance of final award, certificate, and degree:

After the students have completed the DEEC, they are given certificates of achievement by the Ministry of Education; thus having legal status for future promotion at their place of work.